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C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 001659

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DEPT PLEASE PASS TO NEA/ARP FOR RJACHIM/SRAMESH, DRL FOR
EBARKS-RUGGLES/JLIEBERMAN, AND H FOR JREDDY/JBUTTE-DAHL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: MAJLIS EAGER TO ENGAGE WITH CONGRESS; REQUESTS
OFFICIAL INVITATIONS

REF: A. SEPTTEL

[1](#)B. RIYADH 01416

[1](#)C. RIYADH 00881

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Michael Gfoeller for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) PolCouns met with Majlis Al-Shura (Consultative Council) member Dr. Bandar bin Mohammed Al-Aiban recently to discuss the possible participation of Majlis members in the new International Visitor Leadership Program for Saudi regulatory body members, including the Capital Market Authority, Communication and Information Technology Commission (CITC), and Food and Drug Administration. Participants will visit Washington, D.C. in September 2007 to meet with U.S. regulatory bodies, lobbyists for related industries, and law school professors who have drafted regulations. Al-Aiban said that he was "absolutely interested" and would recommend two Majlis members, probably from the Finance and CITC committees. Subsequently Al-Aiban clarified that, in view of their status as Majlis members, it would be best for Majlis members to participate in a separate visit. Al-Aiban requested an official Congressional invitation so that he can proceed with this proposal.

[1](#)2. (C) PolCouns also raised the possibility of Majlis members and staff participating in the next meeting of the U.S.-Saudi Arabia Strategic Dialogue's Human Development Working Group (septel). Al-Aiban responded enthusiastically to this idea, but focused on the participation of members - not staff. He offered that Majlis members would also be interested in participating in the Economic, Energy, and Consular Affairs Working Groups, but that it probably would not be appropriate for them to take part in the Counterterrorism and Military Affairs Working Groups. Al-Aiban further suggested that a seventh Congressional Relations Working Group would be beneficial to both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. PolCouns recommended that Al-Aiban follow up with Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Saud Al Kabeer Al Saud, Head of the MFA's General Directorate for International Organizations and the new co-chair of the Strategic Dialogue. Prince Turki is responsible for selecting participants for efforts relating to the Strategic Dialogue.

[1](#)3. (C) As Chair of the K.S.A.- U.S.A. Friendship Committee, Al-Aiban announced that he is developing a series of exchange visits to the U.S. Congress because there is a "need for greater contacts between Congress and the Majlis." He also confided that Minnesota Representative Keith Ellison, who accompanied Speaker Pelosi in April 2007, may be invited to take part in the annual Hajj. Citing the current NOPEC legislation (ref A), Al-Aiban said it is vital to also bring "non-friends" to Saudi Arabia. In closing, Al-Aiban shared

that he and a small delegation will be traveling to the U.S. in early October to prepare logistics for the planned visit of Majlis President Sheikh Dr. Salih bin Humaid in late 2007. Referring to House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's verbal invitation in April 2007 (ref B) for Humaid to visit Congress, Al-Aiban requested official invitations from Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in order to follow up on that invitation.

GFOELLER